

Members of the Public Health Committee:

In support of HB 6519 AN ACT CONCERNING THE LABELING OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD.

I am an information technology professional by trade, yet I've studied health and nutrition since adolescence. Despite following a healthy lifestyle, I've developed three auto-immune disorders that do not run in my family. Three years ago, I began researching genetically modified organisms (GMOs). One condition likely attributable to GMO Bt products, is permeable gut. According to Scientific American<sup>i</sup>, celiac and other auto-immune diseases may be triggered environmentally in individuals with a permeable gut and genetic susceptibility. We've all observed the explosion of food allergies and auto immune disorders, such as celiac disease, over the past decade.

Based on multiple animal studies, the American Academy of Environmental Medicine implicated GMOs with infertility, immune dysfunction, accelerated aging, dysregulation of genes, along with changes in the liver, kidney, spleen and gastrointestinal system. <sup>ii</sup> For this alone we need labeling.

Those who oppose this labeling may say the FDA found genetically engineered (GE) crops safe. In 1992, the FDA contended that GE plants were 'substantially equivalent' to natural plants, and branded them 'generally recognized as safe' (GRAS). GE crops are NOT 'substantially equivalent' because:

- GMO seeds are patented and laboratory-made, conventional seeds are not.
- Farmers must sign a 'Technology Use Agreement', dictating 'license' of seed use.
- There is no consensus of safety among scientists, not then, not now.
- GMOs have NOT been studied according to scientific, independent peer-reviewed testing. This is not allowed by the biotech companies.
- GMO Bt corn is registered as a pesticide<sup>iii</sup>

Reflect on that last item. Would you sprinkle a spoonful of pesticide on your morning cereal because the FDA deemed it safe? In a way, food manufacturers are doing just that, by using hidden pesticide-containing GMO Bt corn ingredients in a myriad of food products (think high fructose corn syrup).

Consider these facts:

- Americans spend more per capita on healthcare than any other nation on earth
- Americans are sicker and die younger than counterparts in other developed countries<sup>iv</sup>
- America grows and consumes more GMOs than any other country in the world

In the end, I ask you to honor my right to choose, by labeling. I know GMOs are not safe, and there are many like me from all walks of life. I urge you to listen to your constituents and your conscience, and support HB 6519. Do what the FDA would not do; its job. Please protect the citizens of Connecticut and the health of generations to come. Quite simply, do the right thing.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,  
Melissa Talarico  
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<sup>i</sup> Scientific American 'In Brief' - <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=celiac-disease-insights/>

<sup>ii</sup> American Academy of Environmental Medicine - <http://www.aeonline.org/gmopost.html>

<sup>iii</sup> BT corn insecticide - <http://www.epa.gov/opppbpd1/biopesticides/pips/smartstax-factsheet.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> American mortality - <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/01/09/americans-health-mortality-illness/1818903/>